

2/26/58

ADMIRAL WILLIAM SHEPHERD BENSON, U. S. NAVY (DSC)

Admiral Benson was born in Macon, Georgia, on 25 September 1855. He graduated from the Naval Academy in 1877. Died at Washington, D. C., May 20, 1932.

In 1893 he was attached to the USS YANTIC when serving on the coast of Greenland as Tender to the steamer PROTEUS, sent out to search for the exploring party under Lieutenant A. W. Greeley, U. S. Army. YANTIC visited Disco, Upernavik and Littleton Island but found no trace of the lost explorers. She returned to New York September 29th bringing with her Lieutenant Garlington and party and the officers and crew of the PROTEUS which vessel had been crushed in the ice.

During the Spanish-American War he was at the Naval Academy.

Commander Benson took command of the USS ALBANY in October 1908 and was assigned to duty as Chief of Staff, Pacific Fleet, in July 1909. He attained the permanent rank of Captain in July 1909 and commanded the battleship MISSOURI from May 1910 to October 1910 when he was ordered to command the USS UTAH. In August 1913 he reported as Commandant, Navy Yard, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, and as Supervisor of Third, Fourth and Fifth Naval Districts.

He was appointed Chief of Naval Operations with the rank of Rear Admiral when that office was created by Act of Congress in 1915 and was commissioned Admiral when that accompanying rank for the Chief of Naval Operations was authorized by Act of Congress, August 29, 1916. Admiral Benson held that office until he retired from active service on September 25, 1919 when he reached the statutory retirement age of 64. By reason of this office, he was the senior naval officer, afloat and ashore, and next in rank to the Assistant Secretary of the Navy during the World War. He was awarded the Distinguished Service Medal by the Navy Department "for exceptionally meritorious service in a duty of great responsibility as Chief of Naval Operations."

Admiral Benson was a member of the commission appointed by President Wilson to confer with the Allied Powers in Europe in 1917; member special mission abroad October 1918; Naval representative in drawing up Naval terms of Armistice with Germany and Central Powers; Naval advisor to American Commission to Negotiate Peace and returned to the United States on June 20, 1919.

In addition to the Distinguished Service Medal he received foreign decorations as follows: Grand Cross Legion of Honor (French); Grand Cross Order St. Michael and St. George (British); Order St. Gregory, the Great (Military Class, First Order) by Pope Benedict XV.

A destroyer, the USS BENSON (DD-421), named in honor of Admiral William S. Benson, was authorized by act of congress, March 27, 1934, and was launched at the Bethlehem Shipbuilding Corporation, Fore River, Quincy, Massachusetts on November 15, 1939. His widow, Mrs. W. S. (Mary Wyse) Benson, of 2420 Tracy Place, N. W., Washington, D. C., acted as sponsor. The USS BENSON performed outstanding service during World War II, participating in operations in the European Theater.

NAVY - Office of Information
Biographies Branch
26 February 1958

Mrs. Benson, Widow of War Naval Chief

Mrs. William S. Benson, widow of Adm. William S. Benson, who was Chief of Naval Operations during World War I, died yesterday in Towson, Md.

Admiral Benson, who died in 1932, and Mrs. Benson had lived in Washington at Tracy pl. nw. since 1923.

As Chief of Naval Operations, Admiral Benson was technical head of the Navy during World War I.

Mrs. Benson is survived by a daughter Mrs. H. F. Krafft of Annapolis, and two sons, Commodore H. A. J. Benson (USN ret.) of Annapolis and Rear Admiral F. W. Benson (USN-Ret.) of San Diego, nine grandchildren and 16 great-grandchildren.

Services will be held Tuesday at 10:30 a. m. in St. Mary's Church, Annapolis. Interment will follow in Arlington Cemetery.

3894
Nav-327-OF

23 April 1938.

ADMIRAL WILLIAM SHEPHERD BENSON, U. S. NAVY,
RETIRED, DECEASED.
RE: SERVICE OF

1855	Sep	23	Born at Macon, Georgia.
1872	Sep	23	Appointed Cadet Midshipman, Fourth District Georgia. (Hon. T. J. Speer)
1877	Jun	20	Completed four years' course, at Naval Academy.
	Jun	20	Detached from the Academy and w.o.
	Aug	18	To the HARTFORD.
1879	May	1	Det. from the USSAIX and return for examination, 5 June.
	June		Graduated, final.
	Jun	26	Appointed Midshipman to rank from 18 June.
	Oct	22	To the CONSTITUTION.
1881	Jun	30	Det. and temporary duty Navy Yard, New York.
	Nov	3	Commissioned Ensign to rank from 27 July 1881.
1882	Jan	23	Detached and to the ALLIANCE. (Transferred to YANPAC 9 May)
1884	Aug	28	Det. and to duty with Advisory Board.
1885	Mar	6	Det. and to Branch Hydro. Office, Baltimore, Md.
1886	Jan	9	Det. and to P.C. Str. ALBATROSS.
1887	Nov	9	Det. and w.o. (Relieved 22 Nov)
1888	Jan	13	To the DOLPHIN.
	Nov	14	Commissioned Lieutenant, junior grade, to rank from 28 May 1888.
1890	Aug	18	Det. 1 September and to the Naval Academy 20th.
1892	May	9	Det. 28 inst. and to P.C. CONSTELLATION same day.
	Aug	26	Det. and to the Naval Academy.
1893	Sep	22	Det. 30 inst. and be ready for sea.
	Oct	25	To Ordnance instruction, Navy Yard, Washington. (Rep 27 inst)

1893	Oct	27	Commissioned Lieutenant from 27 June 1893.
1894	Jan	2	Det. and to the Coast Survey. (Det 3 Jan and rep 6 Jan)
1895	Jan	4	Transferred from BACHE to BLAKE.
	Nov	22	Det. and to the DOLPHIN. (Det 26 and rep 29)
1896	Apr	15	Det. 30 inst. and to the BLAKE. (Rep 30 Apr)
	May	4	To command the ENDEAVOR. (Rep 6 May)
	Jul	23	Det. 15th and to the Academy 20 August.
1897	Apr	28	Det. and to the R.S. MONONGAHELA 15 May.
	Aug	18	Det. 1 September and to Academy.
1898	May	10	Detached and to the MONONGAHELA as Executive Officer. (Det and rep 16 May)
	May	25	Det. and to the Academy. (Det and rep 26 May)
	Jul	15	Det. and to the R.S. VERMONT. (Det 16 and rep 18 July)
	Nov	18	Det. and to the CHICAGO. (Det and rep 1 Dec)
1899	Sep	20	Detd. Report C-in-C, Atlantic Fleet, duty on NEW YORK. (Det 27 Sept and rep 14 Oct)
1900	Jul	19	Commissioned Lieutenant Commander from 1 July 1900.
	Oct	27	Transferred to the Kearsarge, continue duty on Staff of C-in-C.
1901	Jan	30	Recommissioned from 1 July 1900.
	Apr	22	Det. 30 April and assume charge of Branch Hydro. Office, New York, same day. (Det and rep 30 Apr)
	May	25	Det. 11 June and to the Naval Academy. (Det 1 and rep 2 June)
1903	Sep	26	Det. 15 October and to duty with the IOWA, and to that vessel as Executive when in commission. (Det 15 and rep 16 Oct)
1905	Aug	9	Det. and to duty as Assistant to Inspector in Charge Third Light House District, Tompkinsville, New York, 1 September; and as Assistant to Inspector in Charge Sixth Light House District, Charleston, South Carolina, 15 September, and to duty in Charge Sixth District, 30 September. (Det 13 Aug rep 1 Sept)
	Sep	15	Commissioned ad interim Commander from 1 July 1905.
1906	Feb	28	Commissioned Commander from 1 July 1905.
1907	Jun	8	Det. 20 June and to the Bureau of Navigation. (Det 30 June and rep 2 July)

1907	Jul	6	Det. 11 July and to the Naval Academy same day as Commandant of Midshipmen. (Det and rep 11 July)
1908	May	22	Assigned to command of OLYMPIA.
	Sep	23	To command the ALBANY. (Rep 3 Oct)
1909	May	17	Assigned to duty as Chief of Staff, Pacific Fleet. (Rep 12 July)
	Jul	1	Relieved command of ALBANY this date.
	Aug	30	Commissioned ad interim Captain from 24 July 1909.
	Dec	16	Commissioned Captain from 24 July 1909.
1910	Feb	21	To duty as Member of Naval Examining Board, Washington, D. C., 28 February.
	Apr	22	Det. 30 April and to command the MISSOURI. (Det 30 April and rep 4 May)
	Sep	30	Det. and to duty as General Inspector of UTAH at Works of S.B. Co., Camden, N.J., and to command that vessel when in commission.
1913	Jan	5	Temporary duty in command of First Division, Atlantic Fleet.
	Jul	11	To duty as Commandant, Navy Yard, Philadelphia, Penna., and as Supervisor of Third, Fourth and Fifth Naval Districts, 15 August.
1914	Oct	9	Relieved duty as Supervisor of Third and Fifth Naval Districts.
1915	Apr	29	Det. 10 May and to duty as Chief of Naval Operations, Navy Department, Washington, D. C., 11 May.
	May	11	Accepted appointment and executed oath of office this date.
	May	11	Commissioned ad interim, Chief of Naval Operations in the Department of the Navy, with the rank of Rear Admiral, from 11 May 1915.
	Nov	26	Commissioned, ad interim Rear Admiral, from 26 November 1915.
1916	Feb	1	Commissioned, regular, Chief of Naval Operations, with rank of Rear Admiral, for a period of four years, from 5 January 1916.
	Feb	1	Commissioned regular Rear Admiral from 26 November 1915.
	Sep	8	Commissioned, regular, an Admiral from 29 August 1916, during remainder of term of office as Chief of Naval Operations.

			list of
1917	Dec	17	Entered the upper half of/Rear Admirals (T) from 15 October 1917.
1919	Jan	23	Entered the upper half of list of Rear Admirals from 31 December 1918.
	Sep	15	Transferred to the Retired list from 25 Sept. 1919, having attained statutory age of 64 years.
	Sep	20	Det. when placed on retired list of officers, (Naval Operations, Navy Department, Washington, D. C.), relieved from all active duty and to home. Auth. delay at own discretion in proceeding home. (Det 24 Sept arrived home 10 Nov)
1920	May	1	Temporary duty to appear before the Senate Investigating Committee, 4 day.
1930	Oct	18	Commissioned Admiral on Retired list from 21 June 1930. (Act 21 June 1930)

Member of the Commission appointed by President Wilson to confer with the Allied Powers in Europe in 1917; member special mission abroad October 1918; Naval representative in drawing up Naval terms of Armistice with Germany and Central Powers; Naval advisor to American Commission to Negotiate Peace, and returned to the United States on 20 June 1919.

DISTINGUISHED SERVICE MEDAL for services during the World War, as set forth in the following:

CITATION:

"For exceptionally meritorious service in a duty of great responsibility as Chief of Naval Operations."

DISTINGUISHED SERVICE MEDAL by War Department:

"For exceptionally meritorious and conspicuous service as Chief of Naval Operations. His close cooperation and assistance in that position did much towards the successful outcome of the combined operations of the Army and Navy overseas."

Spanish Campaign Medal.

Victory Medal, World War service.

Grand Cross of the Legion of Honor by
the Government of France.

Knight Grand Cross of the Order of
St. Michael and St. George by the
Government of Great Britain.

Grand Cordon of the Rising Sun by the
Government of Japan.

Order St. Gregory Great (Military Class)
First Order) by Pope Benedict XV.

Died: 20 May 1932.

Place: Washington, D. C.

Next of kin: (widow)

Mary Augusta Benson.

From
ELEVENTH NAVAL DISTRICT
Public Relations Office
(San Diego)



SERIAL SD(a)-1854(44)

Wm. S. Benson
USN

FOR IMMEDIATE PUBLICATION

His grandfather was Rear Adm. William Shepherd Benson, USN, Chief of Naval Operations during World War I.

His father is Capt. Francis Wyse Benson, USN.

His uncle is Capt. Howard H. J. Benson, USN.

So it occasioned little family wonder when William Shepherd Benson, II, following the footsteps of his antecedents, chose the Navy as a career.

Fresh from the U. S. Naval Academy, the 21-year-old descendant of seafaring men---now Ensign Benson---is winding up a month's leave at his home at 3117 28th Street, prior to reporting for active duty on a warship.

He is residing with his mother, Mrs. Dorothy Benson; sister, Lucile, 18, and three brothers, Francis, jr., 17, Richard, 13, and Fred, 11.

"Richard and Fred are too young to know what they want out of life," said the newly-commissioned Ensign, but added that Francis, jr., was slated for a life on the high seas.

"And I'm sure that Richard and Fred will come around to it later---there's just no getting away from it in our family."

Latest member of the Benson menage to embark for the war is ruddy-complexioned, blonde and thin---but opines that Navy chow will probably cause a change in the size of his uniform.

Reared in Naval tradition, Ensign Benson heard the argot of the sea and began tying knots almost from the time his baby fingers discarded rattles. Having always listened to Navy talk, he says he's at last ready to "give out some."

Commenting on his Annapolis training, he declared:

"They try to make us ready in three years for anything upon graduation---and that includes the toughest Japs and Nazis."

He mentioned that Academy men have the "greatest respect and admiration" for the old Navy chiefs.

After graduating from St. Augustine High School, the young naval officer attended Columbian Prep School in Washington, D. C.

--SI--

8-2-44

NAVY PRESS ROOM

IMMEDIATE RELEASE

MAY 20, 1932.

Admiral William Shepherd Benson, U.S. Navy, Retired, who served as Chief of Naval Operations during the World War, died at his home, 2420 Tracy Place, Washington, D.C., shortly after noon today. He is survived by his widow, Mrs. Mary A. Benson, his daughter, Mrs. Herman F. Krafft, of Annapolis, Md., and two sons, Commander Howard H. J. Benson, USN, on duty at the Naval Academy, Annapolis, and Lieutenant Commander Francis W. Benson, USN, gunnery officer of the USS TRENTON.

Admiral Benson was born in Macon, Georgia, September 25, 1855, and was appointed to the Naval Academy in 1872 from the 4th Congressional District of Georgia. He commanded the USS ALBANY, cruiser, in 1908 and was assigned as Chief of Staff, Pacific Fleet in July 1909. He was in command of the battleship USS MISSOURI, from May to October 1910 when he was ordered to command the USS UTAH, battleship. In August 1913, he reported for duty as Commandant, Navy Yard, Philadelphia, and as supervisor of the Third, Fourth, and Fifth Naval Districts.

Upon the creation of the office of Chief of Naval Operations, in May 1915, Admiral Benson, then holding the rank of Captain, was appointed to that duty and in November 1915 was promoted to the permanent rank of Rear Admiral. In August 1916, he was commissioned as Admiral and served as Chief of Naval Operations until relieved from active duty upon reaching the statutory retirement age of 64 years on September 25, 1919.

Admiral Benson served as a member of the commission appointed by President Wilson to confer with the Allied Powers in Europe in 1917, and was a member of a special mission abroad in October 1918, served as naval representative in drawing up Naval terms of the Armistice with Germany and the Central Powers and was naval advisor to the American commission to negotiate peace. He returned from his duties in Europe in June 1919.

For his service during the World War, Admiral Benson was awarded the Distinguished Service Medal by the Navy Department, the Distinguished Service Medal by the War Department; the Grand Cross, Legion of Honor, by the Government of France; the Grand Cross of the Order of St. Michael and St. George, by the British Government; the Order of the Rising Sun, First Class, by the Government of Japan; and the Order of St. Gregory the Great (Military Class, First Order) by Pope Benedict XV.

After his retirement from active duty in the Navy, Admiral Benson served as Chairman of the United States Shipping Board and as President of the Emergency Fleet Corporation in 1920 and 1921 and in June 1921 was appointed Commissioner of the U.S. Shipping Board and served in that capacity until 1928.

NEW YORK TIMES MAY 21, 1932

Admiral William S. Benson (retired) who served as Chief of Naval Operations during the World War and afterward was Chairman of U.S. Shipping Board died at his home 2420 Tracy Place, Washington, D. C. He was 76 years old.

Admiral William V. Pratt, Chief of Naval Operations said; It is with deep regret and with the deepest sympathy that I have just learned of the death of Admiral Benson, whose assistant I was during the World War. In my association with him during those trying days of 1917 and 1918 two characteristics stood to the front - his determination to carry through once he had made up his mind to a certain course of action which he thought right, and the second was his sterling ^{integrity} integrity of character. Coupled with his traits of character, his judgment was invariably sound. He stood like a rock at a time when the Navy needed such men and his name will go down to posterity as one of the finest characters that has ever worn navy cloth.

NEW YORK HERALD-TRIBUNE May 21, 1932

Admiral William S. Benson, educated in public schools of Macon, Georgia, at 18 entered the Naval Academy and graduated in 1877.

Served on many war vessels among them ALLIANCE, DOLPHIN, BLAKE, MONONGHELA, CHICAGO, WILMINGTON, NEW YORK and IOWA.

He commanded the UTAH, ALBANY and MISSOURI. While assigned to the TENNESSEE he served as Chief of Staff of the Pacific Fleet. 1907-1908 Commandant of Midshipmen at Naval Academy., 1913 Commandant Philadelphia Navy Yard and supervisor of the 3rd, 4th and 5th Naval Districts.

Distinguished Service Medal * U.S.
Grand Cross of Legion of Honor (France)
Grand Cross of the Order of St. Michael & St. George (england)
Two times decorated by Vatican. Order of St. Gregory the Great (military class)

and Pope Pius XI conferred upon him the knighthood of the order of Malta. The former decoration is the highest degree bestowed by the Vatican. First American to receive the order of that class.

After his appointment as Chief of Naval Operations he surprised the Navy by having a complete plan for the defense of the United States mapped out.

Took great interest in the reconditioning of the LEVIATHAN the former WATERLAND and he continually urged that United States should not dispose of its then large merchant Marine. He particularly urged that United States meet the 5-5-3 ration that had been agreed upon at the Washington disarmament conference.

Married Mary Augusta Wyse of Baltimore in 1879.

Three children.

by
Done, E. D. at

Library of Cong. 7-13-44

HOLD FOR RELEASE SATURDAY MORNING PAPERS APRIL 10, 1920.

MEMO FOR THE PRESS

Tomorrow, Sunday, April 11th, his eminence Cardinal Gibbons at Baltimor in the name of Pope Benedict XV, will bestow upon Rear Admiral William S. Benson, U.S.N., retired, now Chairman of the Shipping Board, the decoration of the Order of St. Gregory the Great, Military Class. This is the highest degree bestowed by the Vatican on any one and Admiral Benson is the first American citizen who has received this degree of the Military Class. One other American, Mr. Penfield, the ambassador to Austria, received a similar degree but of a different class.

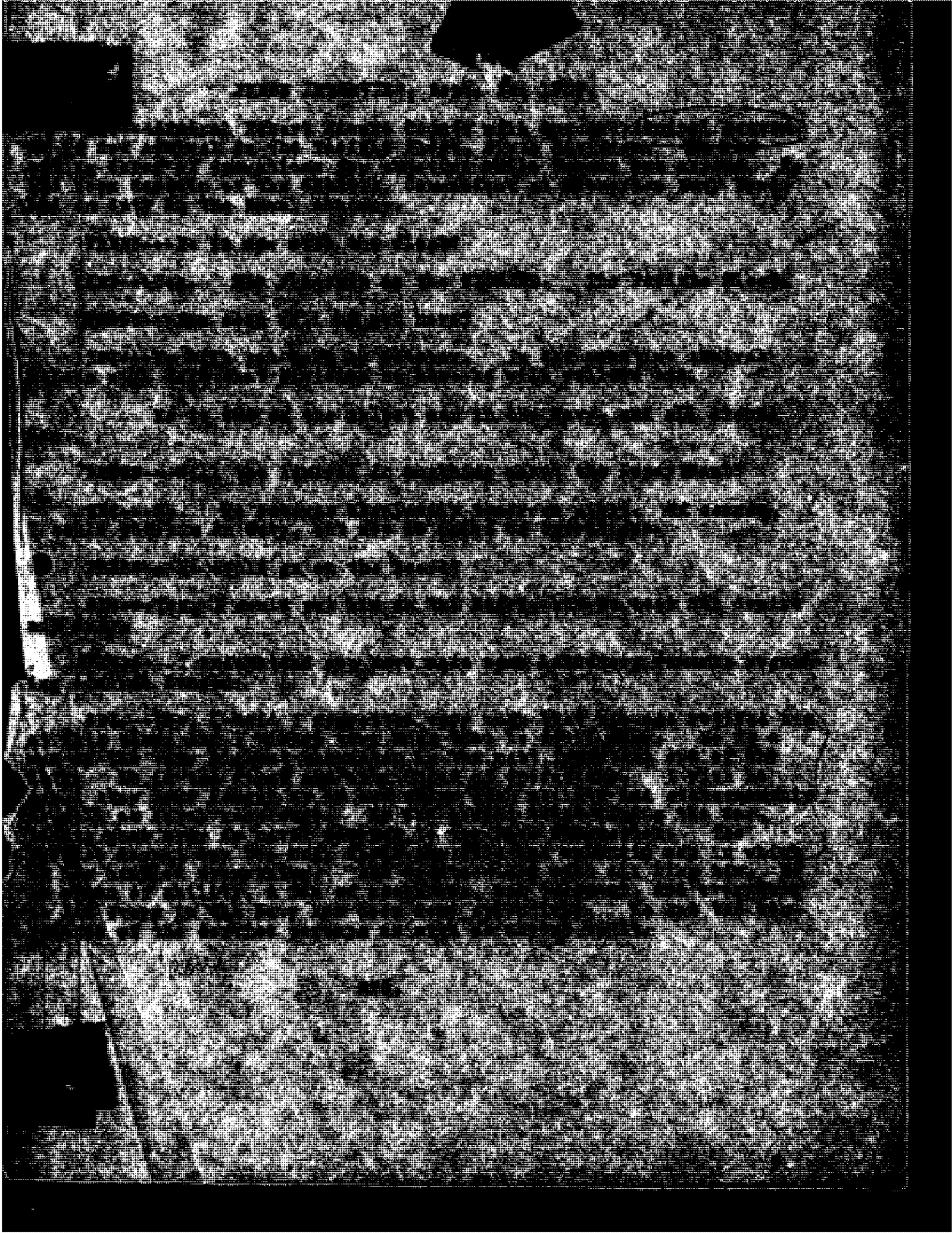
Other decorations that have been conferred upon Admiral Benson in the past follow:

The Grand Cross of the Legion of Honor, the highest degree conferred by the French Government upon foreigners, was bestowed upon him by the President of the France while he was in Paris in attendance at the Peace Conference.

The British Government conferred upon him the decoration and appointed him an Honorary Knight Grand Cross of the Most Distinguished Order of Saint Michael and Saint George. This decoration was conferred upon him by His Royal Highness the Prince of Wales while in Washington during his recent visit to this country.

The Japanese Government bestowed upon him the Order of the Grand Cordon of the First Class, Order of the Rising Sun. This decoration was received through the Japanese Ambassador to the United States.

In addition to the foreign decorations mentioned above, Admiral Benson has received a Gold Medal from the Legislature of the State of New Mexico, conferred by the Governor of New Mexico, September 13, 1919; The Distinguished Service Medal conferred by the Navy Department, and the Distinguished Service Medal conferred by the War Department.



NAVY NEWS BUREAU

Immediate Release

Benson
~~September 23, 1919~~

Canceled Nov 20-1931

Secretary Daniels on the eve of Admiral William S. Benson's retirement from active duty, yesterday sent him the following letter:)

On September 25th, 1919, you will have attained the statutory retirement age of sixty-four (64) years, and will be transferred to the Retired List of Officers of the Navy from that date, in accordance with the provisions contained in the Act of Congress approved August 29, 1916.

On May 11, 1915, you entered upon your duties as the first Chief of Naval Operations, a new office created by Congress for the purpose of directing the operation of the Naval Forces, and the preparation of plans for their use in war.

On November ^{26, 1915} ~~29, 1916~~, you were commissioned an ^{with temporary rank Rear Ad.} ~~Admiral~~ ^{Permanent Rear} in the Navy, which rank you have held since that date. ^{Commissioned Admiral (Temporary) Aug 29-1916 - (when rank ceased for CNO)}

On April 6, 1917, the United States declared war against Germany, and until the armistice was signed on November 11, 1918, the United States Navy was largely responsible for the final and overwhelming defeat of the enemy. During the peace negotiations in Paris you were the principal Naval Advisor to the President of the United States, and in this duty your advice and counsel were of inestimable value.

For more than four years during the most momentous period in the history of the Navy, you have performed the duties of the most important office under the Navy Department with an efficiency and loyalty that commands the respect and admiration not only of the Navy but of the Nation.

I take this opportunity of expressing my deepest regret at the loss of your services, and wish you many happy years of rest after forty-seven years of active naval service.

JOSEPHUS DANIELS.

Permanent commission as Admiral -
Retired List - 21 June 1930

IMMEDIATE RELEASE

JULY 22, 1919.

Secretary Daniels made public the following letter to the House Committee of Naval Affairs.

My dear Mr. Chairman

Chief of Naval Operations
July 22

" I am in receipt of your favor of July 19th, requesting the Department's recommendation on H.R. 7551. The promotion of Admiral William S. Benson and Rear Admiral William S. Sims to be permanent Admirals of the Navy, meets with my cordial and hearty approval and is in accordance with the message which the President sent to Congress on Friday, July 18th.

If the Navy of the United States in the great War Against War has deserved well of the country and if it merits the tributes paid to it at home and by allied nations, its possession of world-pride and world-confidence is due to its demonstrated fitness, readiness and resourcefulness in the days of testing. The Congressional declaration " all is well with the Navy", issued after thorough investigation in critical days, was made possible only by the perfect team work of the entire Navy personnel, embracing the zeal and quickness of the youngest recruit as well as of the wisest and most capable admiral. What measure of gratitude, the Congress, as representative of the whole people, may chose to pay the Navy must go to more than Half a million men who in the peril and hazard of war sought the place of danger and never failed or hesitated in the face of death. But neither Congress nor the country can render deserved honors to all the brave men every one of whom will be awarded a medal in recognition of their valor. Their leaders, young and old, were worthy of them. Congress has authorized honors to be bestowed upon those privileged to perform deeds of special distinction. The impossibility ~~impossibility~~ of fitting recognition of all who are worthy embarrasses the Department and Congress. So many officers and so many men have shown themselves worthy of the highest honors of their country that full recognition must be confined to the men, who, assigned to the most important positions during the war, illustrated the best traditions of the noble service which they and their shipmates of every rank and grade adorn.

Long before the war began, Congress created a new position of leadership in the Navy Department known as the Chief of Naval Operations. To that place of responsibility, the President called William Shepherd Benson, then a Captain in the Navy. In every previous assignment to duty he had demonstrated ability and capacity, and soon the country felt that in the new Chief of Naval Operations it possessed a man who

would measure up to the highest requirements in preparation for war or in the wise professional direction of war. The Naval service already knew his fine qualities, had confidence in his sound judgment, and in his sense of justice. Soon the public learned what the President knew when the selection was made, to wit, that Captain Benson had a rare quality of statesmanship, as well as knowledge of his profession and possessed ability to visualize naval needs and to carry out well matured naval policies. From the day he came to Washington he sensed the national duty and need for naval preparation. When war came it found the Navy ready with all its units for the service required of it. Shortly after our entrance into the war, after study and conference, Admiral Benson was selected to go abroad to confer with our associates and he laid before the Admiralties the views of his country, and co-operated with them in the joint naval policies which more than justified their adoption. When the American Peace Mission assembled in Paris, Admiral Benson was chosen as the Naval Advisor of the Mission, and served his country in that quasi-diplomatic post with the devotion to his country and sound discretion which had attended his whole career. Allied nations have conferred their highest honors upon him, and his own country, I am sure, will honor itself by giving him the highest rank that can come to a naval officer.

In the anxious days before duty led the United States to enter the world war, when it was decided to arm merchant ships, the President determined to send to Great Britain a naval officer of high rank and approved ability to represent our country. He selected for what was then a delicate mission, as it was all during the succeeding months, an assignment that called for a man of quickness of grasp, mastery of his own profession, and ability to sit as the equal in any conference of the naval leaders of the free nations. The country approved the selection of Rear Admiral William Snowden Sims. He had already shown the qualities which made his mission not only of the greatest service to his own country but which brought allied navies into warm fellowship as well as in close cooperation. He was at once welcomed into the conferences of naval leaders and during the whole war was recognized among our allies as well as by his own countrymen as one of the most ablest and most brilliant naval officers in the cause that demanded initiative, understanding, and a comprehension which included among others the hard duty to safeguard the carrying of millions of fighting men across the seas and to defeat the submarine menace. It is a matter for national gratification that in Rear Admiral Sims America sent as Commander of the United States Naval Forces Operating in European Waters an officer who served the world with such conspicuous ability as to win the confidence, the approval, and also the sincere admiration of the whole world. He has been given the highest honors by foreign countries which appreciated his rare accomplishments. He was promoted during the war because of his high merit successively to Vice Admiral and Admiral, and it is just that this highest rank shall be conferred upon him by his countrymen, and that it shall be a decoration for life of which his

children may be proud.

The honors which the President proposed for these distinguished officers is not only a recognition of their large contribution to the winning of the war but these promotions will be ~~recognized~~ regarded by the whole Navy as being conferred because these officers incarnate the courage, the skill and deathless service rendered in the grim days of war by all Navy officers and by Navy ~~men~~ men who gave themselves fully to the victory which blesses mankind today.

I venture to suggest that the bill be amended by adding after "permanent admiral", in line 6 "with the pay of active admiral during their lives" and by striking out the words "and they shall not be placed upon the retired list except upon their own application", and, in lieu thereof there be substituted "and the President is authorized in his discretion, upon or after their retirement, to assign them to active duty." The policy of placing any officer permanently on the active list is one which is open to grave objection. These officers should, upon reaching the age of retirement, be placed upon the same footing as all other officers, and their continuance upon active duty should be determined by the Commander in Chief of the Navy, who may well be empowered, in his discretion, to assign them to active duty after retirement.

If these changes are made the bill would read as follows:

'A Bill to appoint Admiral William S Benson, United States Navy, and Rear Admiral William S Sims, United States Navy, as permanent admirals in the Navy.

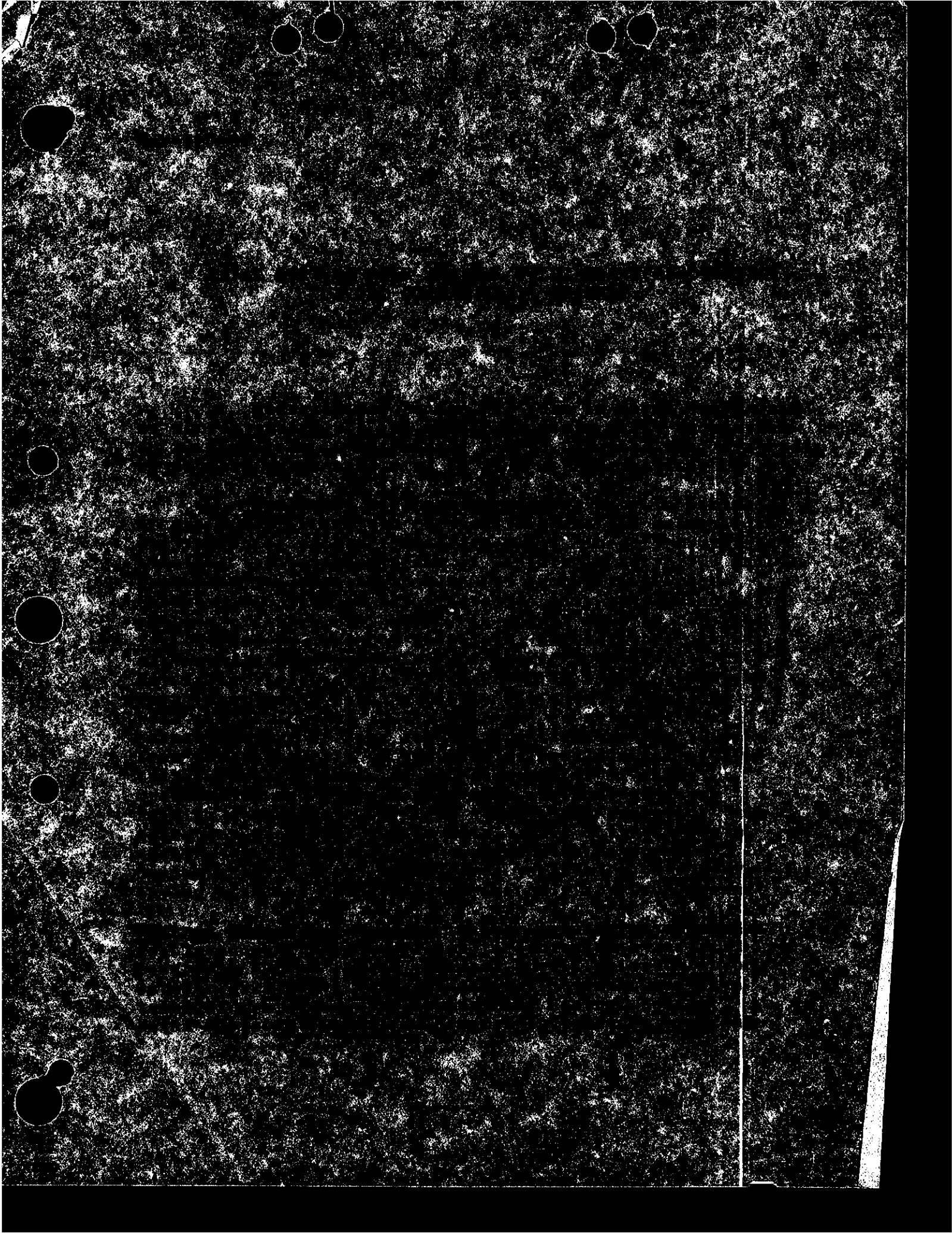
"Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled, That the President is hereby authorized to appoint, by and with the advice and the Senate, Admiral William S. Benson, United States Navy and Rear Admiral William S. Sims, United States Navy, permanent admirals with the pay of active admiral during their lives, and the President is authorized in his discretion, upon or after their retirement, to assign them to active duty, and whenever ~~the~~ such offices shall be vacated by death or otherwise the offices shall cease to exist."

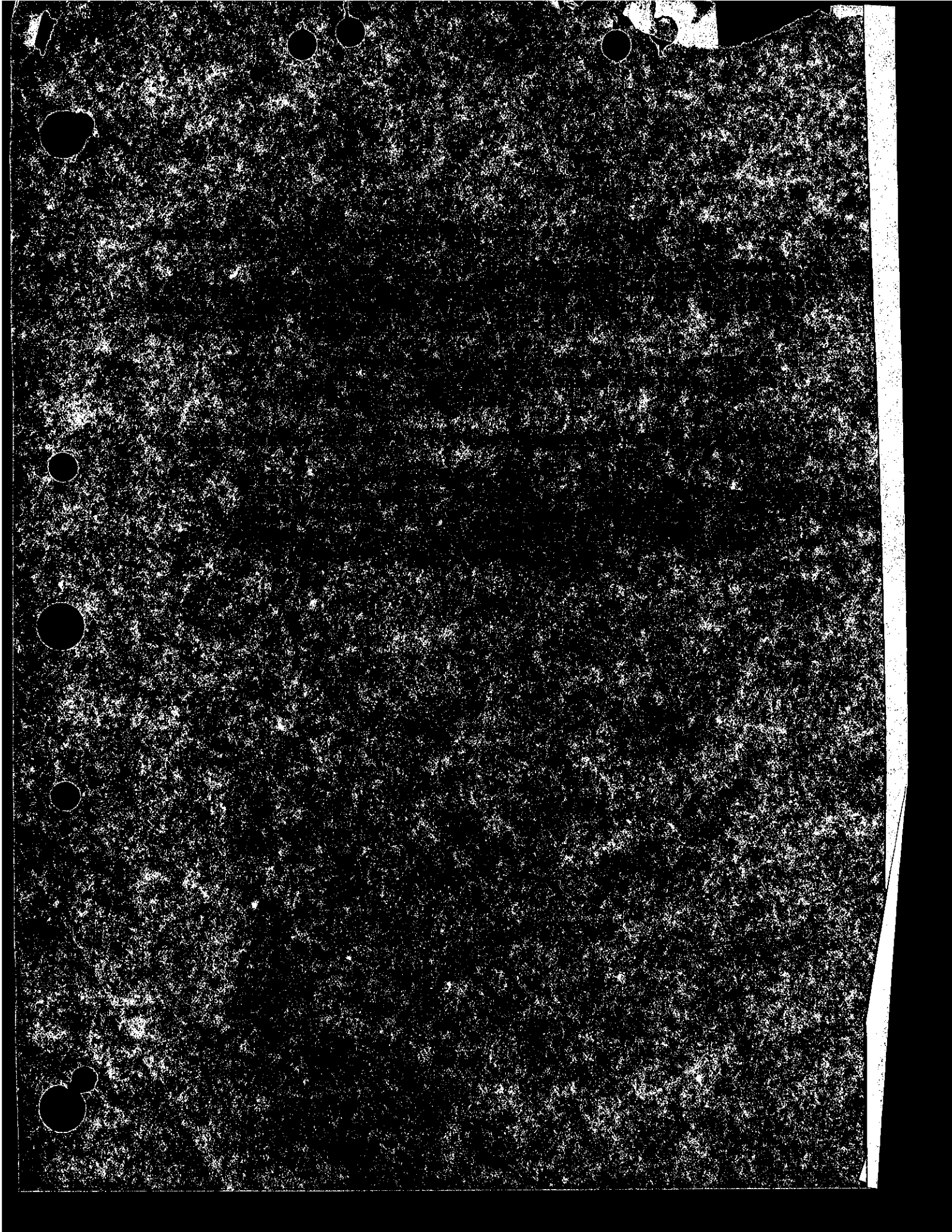
With these minor changes, I earnestly recommend the passage of ~~the~~ H.R. 7551, introduced in the House on July 18th by Chairman Butler.

I am appending hereto a brief summary of the Naval service ~~record~~ of both these naval officers.

Sincerely yours,

(Signed) Josephus Daniels.





ADMIRAL WILLIAM S. BENSON

The records of the Department show that Admiral William Shepherd Benson, U.S.N. was born in Bibb Co., Georgia, September 25, 1855. He was appointed a cadet midshipman to the Naval Academy from the Fourth District of Georgia, September 23, 1872, and completed the course June 20, 1877. On June 18, 1879, he was promoted to the rank of midshipman and served on the U.S.S. CONSTITUTION for two years. He was appointed an ensign July 27, 1881, after which his promotions came in the following order, Lieutenant (jg), 1888; Lieutenant, 1893; Lieutenant-Commander 1900; Commander, 1905; Captain, 1909; Rear Admiral, 1915; Admiral (Chief of Naval Operations) 1916. He has served during his naval career as an officer on vessels, among others, U. S. S. ALLIANCE, U.S.S. DOLPHIN; U.S.S. BLAKE, training ship, CONSTELLATION, U.S.S. MONONGAHELA, U.S.S. CHICAGO, U.S.S. WILMINGTON, U.S.S. NEW YORK, U.S.S. IOWA, U.S.S. TENNESSEE (Chief of Staff of the Pacific fleet), U.S.S. UTAH (Commanding Officer), U.S.S. ALBANY (Commanding Officer), and the U.S.S. MISSOURI (Commanding Officer). He served as commandant of midshipmen at the Naval Academy from 1907 to 1908. He was Commandant of the Philadelphia Navy Yard and Supervisor of the Third, Fourth, and Fifth Naval Districts from August, 1913- ~~March 1915~~ ^{May 1915}, on which date, he was assigned to duty as the Chief of Naval Operations, taking oath of office from May 11, 1915, being commissioned with the rank of Rear Admiral from that date, this rank being later changed to that of Admiral on August 29, 1916. In the latter part of 1917, he was assigned to temporary duty abroad in London, after which he returned to the United States and on October 15, 1918, he was ordered to special duty at Paris, and remained abroad until June 11, 1919, on which date he sailed for the United States.

Relieved

Sept. 1908 - Asst. Sec. Fleet
 Comd. Albany
 1909 - Chief Staff
 E. C. 1910 - 24 - 1909 Board
 Member Naval
 Jan. 1910 - ap 30-1910
 Comd. Minnesota
 Gen. Staff - Works
 1910 - 1913
 Detached U.S. 1913

Perm. Rear Ad.
 Nov. 25-1915
 Admiral
 29 Aug. 1916 -
 Ret. 24 Sept. 1919
 21 June 1930 -

James

NAVY DEPARTMENT

IMMEDIATE RELEASE

22 September 1939

SPONSOR DESIGNATION--USS BENSON

Acting Secretary of the Navy, the Honorable Charles Edison, has designated Mrs. William S. Benson of 2420 Tracy Place, N. W., Washington, D. C. as sponsor for the USS BENSON (DD421) named in honor of her husband, the late Admiral William Shepherd Benson, U. S. Navy.

The USS BENSON (DD421) is scheduled to be launched at the plant of the Bethlehem Shipbuilding Corporation, Fore River, Quincy, Massachusetts, November 15, 1939.

This vessel, the first one of that name, was authorized by Act of Congress March 27, 1934.

* * * * *

In the Press.

It is with great regret & with the deepest sympathy
that I have just learned of the death of Admiral Benson
~~my immediate Chief~~ whose assistant I was during the
World War. In my association with him during those
try ing days of 1917 and 1918 his characteristics stood
to the front, his determination ^{to carry through} once he had made
up his mind to a certain course of action which is straight
right; and the second was his striking integrity of
character. Coupled with these traits of character
his judgment invariably was sound. ~~He was the finest~~
~~strong it would have been a calamity to lose him~~
~~of intellect coupled with a rare ability to~~
~~to see beyond the obvious integrity of Admiral Benson~~
~~character.~~ He stood like a rock at a time when
the Navy needed such men, & his name will go down
to posterity as one of the finest characters that have
ever worn the Navy cloth.

D. R. Hall

THE CHIEF OF NAVAL OPERATIONS - A BRIEF HISTORY

In the early 1900's with the emergence of the United States as a global power and the accelerating changes in technology, the Navy Department outgrew the old planning and control organization. In 1909 a new coordinating staff of four members, called "aides" was created by the Secretary of the Navy. Of these, the most important was the Aide for Operations, a Rear Admiral responsible to the Secretary of the Navy for ship operations, planning, intelligence, fleet training, logistics, and recommending the appointment of flag and commanding officers. War plans and strategic problems, formerly a function of the Naval War College, were joined with operations and training under the Aide of Operations, the direct predecessor of the Chief of Naval Operations (CNO).

→ Admiral William S. Benson, USN, 11 May 1915 - 25 September 1919

With the approval of Congress on May 11, 1915, Admiral William S. Benson assumed the newly-created four star post of Chief of Naval Operations. Facing the new CNO was the task of readying the Navy against the German U-boat threat. The 1916 Naval Appropriations Act brought about the first large scale continuing naval construction program. War was declared on Germany on April 6, 1917. With new anti-submarine ships, aircraft and mines, Admiral Benson led the Navy in the establishment of the ocean convoy bridge to France that carried General Pershing's army and supplies overseas. To assure coordination of allied naval plans, he went to Paris in August 1917 for the first Allied Naval Council. At the 1919 Versailles Armistice Meeting Admiral Benson was naval advisor to the U. S. delegation.

Admiral Robert E. Coontz, USN, 1 November 1919 - 21 July 1923

With the post-World War era the Navy was reduced. Admiral Robert E. Coontz became Chief of Naval Operations on November 1, 1919. He devoted much effort to holding naval strength against economic cutbacks. He worked to advance naval aviation, anti-aircraft gunnery, submarines and engineering, the Navy's most significant achievements in the 1920's. Under Admiral Coontz's leadership in 1921 the Bureau of Aeronautics (now Naval Air Systems Command) was created. In 1922 a converted collier, USS LANGLEY, became the first aircraft carrier.

Admiral Edward W. Eberle, USN, 21 July 1923 - 14 November 1927

Operating on a restricted budget under the limitations of the 1922 Washington Disarmament Conference the next CNO, Admiral Edward W. Eberle, assumed the top uniformed post in 1923. He pressed for a renewal of naval construction. In 1925, Admiral Eberle's testimony before President Coolidge's national aviation policy board (Morrow Board) was decisive in saving naval aviation. He maintained that naval aviators must first be seamen and that naval aviation must be integrated into the fleet. To provide a trained Naval Reserve, Admiral Eberle assured the state Naval Militia units of realistic training at sea. In 1926 he won authorization for the Naval Reserve Officer Training Corps (NROTC) at 6 Universities throughout the U. S.

Admiral Charles F. Hughes, USN, 14 November 1927 - 17 September 1930

Admiral Charles F. Hughes assumed the post of CNO on November 14, 1927. Although considered a battleship Admiral, he had a keen appreciation of naval aviation, which came of age under his leadership. In 1927 the aircraft carriers USS LEXINGTON (CV-2) and USS SARATOGA (CV-3) joined the fleet. In the war games of 1929-30 these carriers, constructed on cruiser hulls, demonstrated the effectiveness of carrier air power. In 1928 Admiral Hughes requested appropriations for construction of 15 light cruisers and the Navy's first carrier designed from the keel up. This carrier became the USS RANGER (CV-4) in 1934. The cruiser construction program which Admiral Hughes had initiated was limited by the depression of 1929.

Admiral William V. Pratt, USN, 17 September 1930 - 30 June 1933

In September 1929, shortly after his return from the London Naval Conference, where he served as the principal U. S. technical advisor, Admiral William V. Pratt became Chief of Naval Operations. Under Admiral Pratt, modernization was completed on the elderly World War I battleships that were to be called to use in World War II. He also succeeded in getting some new cruiser construction approved. During Admiral Pratt's tenure naval aircraft strength passed the 1,000 mark in 1933, and the U. S. Navy possessed more than twice as many naval aircraft as second-ranking Japan. With the Japanese seizure of Manchuria in 1931, the road that led to Pearl Harbor had begun.

Admiral William H. Standley, USN, 1 July 1933 - 1 January 1937

On July 1, 1933, as Admiral William H. Standley assumed the duties of CNO, the rise of Nazi power coupled with Japanese aggression clearly warned of trouble in both Europe and Asia. Admiral Standley helped to shape the 1934 Vinson-Trammell Act. This act was the greatest single step up to that time in naval preparation to meet growing world challenges. In all 102 ships were projected, over an eight year period, including the carriers YORKTOWN, and ENTERPRISE. As Admiral Standley's term drew to a close in 1936, open hostilities were just over the horizon in Europe and Asia.

Admiral William D. Leahy, USN, 2 January 1937 - 1 August 1939

Admiral William D. Leahy took the Navy helm in January 1937, and in December of that year Japanese aircraft in China sank the gunboat USS PANAY in the Yangtze River without warning. With the threat posed by the developing worldwide conflicts, Admiral Leahy asked for increased naval strength. His advice was heeded and carried out in the Naval Appropriation Act of 1938 which added 20 per cent to the Navy's tonnage. This Act fixed naval aircraft strength at 3,000 and provided funds for construction of the aircraft carrier HORNET and South Dakota-class Battleships. The danger of a lag in base development led to a study under Admiral Leahy's direction. The study recommended the establishment of 25 bases to serve the fleet. Admiral Leahy obtained an immediate appropriation from Congress for 15 bases, extending from Kodiak, Alaska through Pearl Harbor to Palmyra Island in the Pacific and from San Juan, P. R. to Quonset Point, R. I. in the Atlantic. Admiral Leahy urged, to no avail, the inclusion of a naval base for the fleet on Guam.

Admiral Harold R. Stark, USN, 1 August 1939 - 26 March 1942

Admiral Harold R. Stark relieved Admiral Leahy on August 1, 1939. One month later Hitler invaded Poland. Reaction was immediate, and the American Republics adopted the Declaration of Panama, establishing a neutral zone around North and South America except for Canada. Admiral Stark deployed offshore destroyer patrols to prevent interference with nonbelligerent commerce. In 1940, with President Roosevelt's approval, Admiral Stark led the drive for a two ocean Navy. Congress appropriated funds to double existing tonnage and construct, among other units: 10 Essex-class carriers, 9 Independence-class light carriers, 6 Iowa-class battleships, 8 Baltimore-class heavy cruisers, 67 Fleet submarines and 119 Fletcher class destroyers. In September 1940, Admiral Stark directed that 50 World War II "four piper" destroyers be delivered to the British Royal Navy in return for base agreements stretching from Newfoundland to Trinidad. As the two-ocean Navy took shape, he also directed that the Patrol Force in the Atlantic be renamed the U. S. Atlantic Fleet. In

October 1941 as the Nazi U-boat wolf packs cruised the Atlantic, Admiral Stark ordered direct U. S. Navy convoy assistance to within 400 miles of Ireland. On December 7, 1941 the Japanese attacked Pearl Harbor. On December 30, 1941 Admiral Ernest J. King assumed duties as Commander in Chief, U. S. Fleet. Admiral Chester W. Nimitz on the following day broke his flag as Commander in Chief, Pacific Fleet. The Navy now began the job of building the greatest naval fleet in recorded history.

Admiral Ernest J. King, USN, 26 March 1942 - 15 December 1945

To centralize the nation's naval effort as the demands of war increased, the jobs of Commander in Chief of the U. S. Fleet and Chief of Naval Operations were combined by Executive Order on March 12, 1942. Admiral Ernest J. King, became the top operating chief of the Navy. All major naval movements were designated by Admiral King, and were planned and carried out by outstanding World War II leaders such as Admirals Nimitz, Spruance, Halsey, and Hewitt. In the European areas naval operations included the North African landings, Sicilian and Italian invasions and, in 1944, the Normandy landing. Admiral King organized the Tenth Fleet, responsible for anti-submarine warfare. Using new "hunter-killer" tactics and equipment, the U. S. Navy sank nearly 200 Axis submarines.

In the Pacific, Task Forces in thousand-mile jumps knifed through archipelagos leaving enemy forces to "wither on the vine" and moved toward Japan. All elements of seapower were brought to bear: amphibious forces with their embarked Marines; heavy gunfire support of battleships, cruisers, and destroyers; submarines which cut Japan's supply arteries; and the fast Carrier Task Forces providing the far reaching air power. The mobility of naval warfare demanded the extensive use of service forces consisting of oilers, ammunition ships, refrigerator ships and floating drydocks. Ashore Navy Construction Battalions called "Sea Bees" carved airfields and bases from the coral atolls. The naval transportation service at the same time kept supplies flowing over the sealanes to the Allies. Not to be neglected and of importance to the post-war security of the U. S. , Admiral King pressed for scientific researchers in the Navy and close relationship between the Navy, universities and industry to bring forth the best and most modern weapon developments. Navy sponsored research produced better radar, jet aircraft propulsion, the gyrocompass and many other improved systems utilized in the post World War II era.

Fleet Admiral Chester W. Nimitz, USN, 15 December 1945 - 15 December 1947

Fleet Admiral Chester W. Nimitz became the next Chief of Naval Operations on December 15, 1945. Admiral Nimitz saw to it that the boys got home in the vast troop lift known as operation "Magic Carpet". With the post war call for a reduced Navy, Admiral Nimitz held the line for a balanced Navy in fighting trim. During this period significant steps were made toward nuclear ship

propulsion. Naval aviation set a world's distance record that lasted into the 1960's and guided missile development moved ahead. In Europe and the Middle East, Communist forces began a campaign of political agitation to gain control of Greece, Turkey and Iran. Admiral Nimitz dispatched the Battleship USS MISSOURI, aircraft carrier USS F. D. ROOSEVELT, cruiser USS LITTLE ROCK and supporting destroyers to the Mediterranean as clear evidence that the United States would support its allies and stand firm against Communist aggression. With this visual evidence of U. S. support the threatened countries stood fast against Communist pressure. This naval force in the Mediterranean was the predecessor of the Sixth Fleet.

Admiral Louis E. Denfeld, USN, 15 December 1947 - 2 November 1949

Official designation of the Sixth Fleet in the Mediterranean and the Seventh Fleet in the Western Pacific came under the next CNO, Admiral Louis E. Denfeld. Admiral Denfeld led a Navy in December 1947 that operated within a tight budget. Communist ambitions soon brought about the 1948 Berlin Crisis. Naval Aviation transport squadrons joined in the Berlin Airlift to supply that hungry city. As the crisis waned, Admiral Denfeld flew to Europe in the summer of 1947 and assisted in planning with the Western Allies the new military organization which became the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO).

Admiral Forrest P. Sherman, USN, 2 November 1949 - 22 July 1951

In November 1949, Admiral Forrest P. Sherman took over as Chief of Naval Operations and on the morning of June 25, 1950 the Korean war began. The task of rapidly expanding the Navy during the Korean war was made possible in large part by the Naval Reserve and the nucleus reserve fleet kept ready by the previous holders of the top Navy uniformed post. Once again during this war seapower kept the sealanes open and the amphibious landing at Inchon proved again the usefulness of conventional amphibious power. Admiral Sherman while flying to Europe on an important military-political mission suffered a heart attack and died in July 1951.

Admiral William M. Fechteler, USN, 16 August 1951 - 17 August 1953

Admiral William M. Fechteler became Chief of Naval Operations on August 16, 1951. He vigorously continued the buildup of the Navy during the Korean war. Amphibious forces were expanded and Navy research and development moved ahead. The first guided missiles were introduced to the fleet. With the accent by the Communists in Korea on mine warfare, training in this type of warfare was expanded. In 1953, Admiral Fechteler retired. Naval strength was double that of 1950.

Admiral Robert B. Carney, USN, 17 August 1953 - 17 August 1955

Admiral Robert B. Carney, who became CNO on August 17, 1953, continued to lead the Navy through a period of technical and scientific progress. The hydrogen bomb and the nuclear age were now realities. The submarine USS NAUTILUS, the first nuclear powered ship in the world, was commissioned on September 30, 1954. Also in 1954, Navy ships carried thousands of Vietnamese refugees to the safety of South Vietnam as the Communist forces took control of North Vietnam. A fleet modernization and new construction program was underway during this period and in 1955 the first Post-World War II carrier, USS FORRESTAL, joined the fleet.

Admiral Arleigh A. Burke, USN, 17 August 1955 - 1 August 1961

The next Chief of Naval Operations, Admiral Arleigh A. Burke, held the office for an unprecedented six years. Few actions have had such dramatic impact on the balance of power as Admiral Burke's decision on the Polaris missile. He ordered the organization of the Special Weapons Task Force that led to the launching on July 20, 1960 of the first Polaris missile from the nuclear submarine USS GEORGE WASHINGTON. Communist exploitation continued during this period with explosive situations in Suez, Syria, Jordan, Quemoy and Matsu. The Navy played an important role during this period by providing ready on-scene power from the sea. In 1958 the Sixth Fleet, at the request of the government of Lebanon, landed Marines there to assure that country's freedom. In the spring of 1960 the nuclear-powered submarine USS TRITON circumnavigated the earth submerged.

Admiral George W. Anderson, USN, 1 August 1961 - 1 August 1963

Admiral George W. Anderson became Chief of Naval Operations on August 1, 1961. Under his direction the Navy continued to modernize. The first nuclear powered ships, the carrier USS ENTERPRISE and the cruiser USS LONG BEACH, were commissioned in 1961, bringing about the new reality of a surface nuclear Navy. The Cuban Missile Crisis of October 1962 was a prime example of measured naval response. Other crisis situations from the Caribbean to the Eastern Mediterranean and Southeast Asia kept the Navy on the move during Admiral Anderson's tenure.

Admiral David L. McDonald, 1 August 1963 - 1 August 1967

On August 1, 1963, Admiral David L. McDonald became CNO. Foremost among the challenges facing him was the rising Communist aggression in South Vietnam. With the greatly expanded Communist infiltration of South

Vietnam by the Communist Viet Cong and Regular North Vietnamese Forces the Navy expanded its assistance to South Vietnam. In 1964 North Vietnamese PT boats attacked the Seventh Fleet destroyers USS MADDOX and TURNER JOY in the Gulf of Tonkin. Air strikes against North Vietnamese PT boat bases followed from Seventh Fleet carriers. As U. S. assistance increased in South Vietnam, Communist inspired riots broke out in the Dominican Republic in April 1965. At the request of the Dominican President, U. S. Marines of the Atlantic Fleet Ready Amphibious Squadron were landed to restore order to the country.

By early 1966 in Vietnam, the steady buildup of naval river patrols, anti-infiltration coastal blockade, amphibious operations, gunfire support and carrier air strikes were successfully blended into the South Vietnamese defense effort. The Marines, Army, Navy, Air Force and allied forces ashore were supported from the sea with an 8,000 mile life line bringing in 98% of the supplies and 2 out of 3 of the men by ship to Vietnam. With the buildup in the Western Pacific units from the Atlantic Fleet were deployed to the Seventh Fleet on a rotational basis. The first nuclear powered surface task force consisting of the carrier ENTERPRISE, cruiser LONG BEACH and frigate BAINBRIDGE went into combat action off Vietnam for the first time in 1966. The last of 41 Polaris equipped nuclear submarines USS WILL ROGERS (SSBN-659) was commissioned on 1 April 1967.

Admiral Thomas H. Moorer, USN, 1 August 1967 -

Admiral Thomas H. Moorer became the eighteenth Chief of Naval Operations on August 1, 1967. The Vietnam War continued and the Navy technological arm reached undersea and into space. In 1968 the ascending strength of the Soviet Navy became apparent with the appearance of a large Russian task force in the Mediterranean. Soviet cruiser-destroyer squadrons operating in the Red Sea and Indian Ocean on show-the-flag missions signaled the creation of a permanent naval presence. While this challenge gave new urgency to the American seapower effort, the cold war in Europe flared again with the Russian invasion of Czechoslovakia.

On the other side of the globe, the Navy adapted to new developments in Vietnam. When bombing of the North was halted, offshore strike forces moved south to concentrate support for Allied forces within South Vietnam and along the Demilitarized zone. Navy Riverine Forces and support units kept open Allied supply channels in country and consolidated new government holds in the Mekong Delta.

At home, the CNO called for modernization of aging naval forces and advanced the "multiple-buy" system, assuring a steady, yearly input of destroyers, frigates and other new ships for the fleet. Nuclear submarine construction entered a new phase.